

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, 1, 4, 9, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 are amended. Support for the amendments to the claims can be found, for example, in paragraphs [0047] and [0048] of the specification. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 1-8 and 20 recite allowable subject matter. In view of the indication of allowability, and to expedite allowance of the application, independent claim 9 is amended to depend from independent claim 4. Applicants submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance, as discussed below.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-8, 13, 14 and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. By this Amendment, the claims are amended as suggested in the Office Action to obviate the rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 9-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,352,747 to Blackburn et al. (Blackburn). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

By this Amendment, independent claim 9 is amended to depend from independent claim 4, which is indicated as reciting allowable subject matter. Accordingly, independent claim 9 also recites allowable subject matter, and is patentable over Blackburn. Claims 10-19

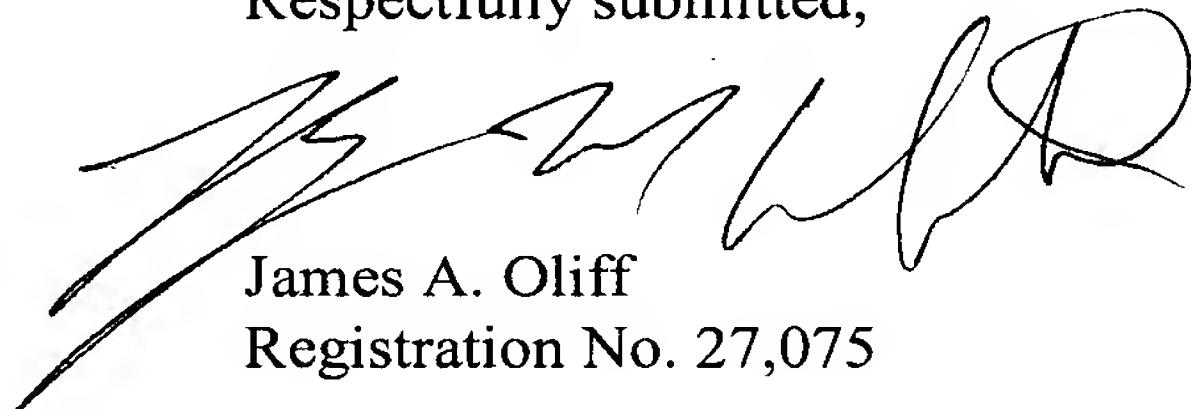
depend from claim 9 and are, therefore, also patentable over Blackburn at least for the dependence, as well as for the additional features these claims recite.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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